

NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)Klamath Basin RANKING CRITERIA WORKSHEET - Fiscal Year 2004
Ground and Surface Water Conservation Initiative (GSWC)Introduction:

The NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that promotes wise use and conservation of natural resources. Through EQIP, farmers, ranchers and other eligible land managers may receive financial and technical assistance to install or implement structural, vegetative and management practices on eligible agricultural lands. The NRCS EQIP program is authorized under provisions of legislation codified in 16 U.S.C. 3801 et seq. and the rule is published in the Federal Register, 7CFR, Part 1466. Program information can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>. EQIP program activities are carried out according to a conservation plan of operations developed in cooperation with an eligible producer. Conservation plans and contracts submitted for consideration for EQIP benefits are ranked according to the degree of environmental benefit achieved when the plan is fully implemented. Those contracts with the greatest environmental benefit are eligible for funding and development of an EQIP contract. This worksheet is used by NRCS staff to document environmental benefit from the proposed EQIP contract and subsequently to rank the project for eligibility.

The Klamath Basin ranking process utilizes criteria that predict the amount of "net water savings" resulting from installation of practices scheduled in the proposed EQIP contract. NRCS will utilize a "Farm Irrigation Rating Index (FIRI)" process to estimate water usage prior (Benchmark) to installation of any practices or improvements and the amount of water saving expected after installation of practices or system improvements (Planned). The predicted difference between the Benchmark condition and Planned condition equals the estimated "net water savings". The FIRI process uses site-specific conditions such as the type of irrigation system improvements, soil texture, soil intake rate, and crop related factors to determine water use.

Farm Irrigation Rating Index (FIRI):

The FIRI system is an MS Excel Spreadsheet based program used to estimate the before (benchmark) and after (planned) net water savings. The program requires a field visit by a qualified specialist to obtain physical data about the existing irrigation system, site location and a short interview of the operator to record management decisions. The program uses factors such as method of irrigation, irrigation efficiency, water measurement, soil moisture/condition factors, irrigation application/distribution decisions, maintenance, delivery factors, conveyance efficiency, climate, cultural operations and other details that are obtained at the time of the field visit. The entire program is detailed and is available for public access through one of the NRCS offices located in the Klamath Basin. The result of the FIRI evaluation is the actual "net water savings" predicted for the proposed EQIP application and also equates to the environmental ranking score documented on the next page.

Required Documentation and Signature Approvals:

Completion of this worksheet and documentation does not constitute agreement to provide EQIP program benefits nor approval of an EQIP contract. In addition to person and land eligibility considerations, this worksheet must be accompanied by a complete EQIP Program Application (Signed and completely filled out form CCC-1200 "Conservation Program Application/Contract" and signed form CCC-1200 "Appendix"). When completed for each eligible applicant, enter names, total Environmental Score, and other data on the "Final Ranking Report" to be sent to the appropriate Oregon or California State Office for review and approval.



**NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program
KLAMATH BASIN RANKING CRITERIA WORKSHEET**

Detailed Ranking Criteria Worksheet:

Client Name:		Date:	
Address:		Application No.:	
City, State, ZIP:		County:	
Phone No.:		Farm No.:	
Evaluator 1:		Tract No.:	
Evaluator 2:		Acres:	

General Project Description:

Environmental Score Summary

Date <u>complete</u> EQIP application was submitted to NRCS office:			
A.	Benchmark Condition	Enter FIRI estimated water use for existing irrigation system:	
B.	Planned condition	Enter FIRI estimated water use for planned irrigation system:	
	A - B =	Total "Net Water Savings" & Environmental Score:	

Record Environmental Score along with other applicant information on "Final Ranking Report" and send to appropriate Oregon or California State Office. In the event of any application(s) having the same resulting Environmental Score and no other information or data is available to differentiate between applications based upon the primary criteria of "Net Water Savings", funding decisions will be determined by "Date" when a complete EQIP application was submitted to NRCS (First come, first serve).

Signatures:

Designated Conservationist Approval: _____ Date: _____

Applicant Acknowledgement: _____ Date: _____

Note: Completion of this worksheet and documentation of an environmental score does not constitute agreement to provide EQIP program benefits nor approval of an EQIP contract.